appointments can be scheduled now, and a green light sign 77 meaning that information is up to date and that no further appointments are necessary. The "question mark" icon 76 means that necessary information has not been entered in the computer system and further data must be entered before any determination can be made. A "red cross" icon 78 means that the patient has a medical condition that warrants special consideration.

The application program allows the operator to set certain parameters or load certain information which can then be used over and over again in scheduling appointments. For example, the "Setup" menu 129 (FIG. 14) includes an "Option" command 132. When executed by the mouse or equivalent key strokes, this command will cause display of an "Options" window 80 (FIG. 7) and a multi-tab set of dialog panels 81 with tabs 82 for general, password, status colors, customers, and group/resource sorting.

Referring to FIG. 7, when the "Status Color" tab 82 is selected, another portion of program code is executed to display a panel 81 for setting the appointment status colors for new, checked-in and canceled appointments, using edit buttons 83 to cause display of a color window (not shown) with a palette of colors displayed in a matrix for selection of an individual color by mouse clicks or keystrokes. The status color of each appointment will appear in the thermometer bar graph 44 of each schedule (FIG. 2). The color also appears in a small check box (not shown in FIG. 2) in the entry in the appointment row 45a. In FIG. 2, the operator can click on the first color showing a "not checked-in" appointment to jump to the first such appointment. The "canceled" status and the "not checked in" status allows the operator or office manager to summarize results at the end of the day.

Referring next to FIG. 8, when the "Customer" tab 82 is selected, another portion of program code is executed to display a dialog panel that includes a check box 84, radio buttons 85, a file locator window 86 and lists 87 for selecting fields of data from an external database file to be imported as a database file for the appointment scheduling application. Alternatively, a file of patients and appointments can be developed completely within the scheduling program, however, most offices will have a pre-existing file of patient data.

Referring to FIG. 9, when the "Group/Resource Sort" tab 82 is selected, another portion of program code is executed to display a dialog panel with lists 90, 91 of groups and resources which can be sorted by ascending or descending order using button 89. The dialog panel 81 also allows the changing of the order of appearance of the groups and resources in the menu lists 90 by moving a group or resource up or down the list in the dialog box using the command buttons 92. Groups or resources are added through the "Group" and "Resource" commands in the "Setup" menu 129. The group and resource organization allows sorting in the monthly schedule (FIGS. 3, 4) by group and resource which is very advantageous in scheduling new appointments among many other previous appointments, as well as coordinating resources.

The above-mentioned operations were carried out under the "Options" command 132 in the "Setup" menu 129 (FIG. 14). Another advantageous command is the "Appointment Types" command 134. When this command is selected and executed, another portion of program code is executed to display a dialog box 95 (FIG. 10), including a window 96 for entry of appointment types such as vaccination, surgeries and examinations. Windows 97, 100 and data boxes 98, 99 are provided for entering appointment descriptions, duration in hours and minutes and an assigned group for conducting

the appointment. These appointments can be set up by one specialist, and then used by other office personnel over and over again simply by selecting the appointment type from a list. In making the appointment (FIG. 5), the appointment maker sets the start time, selects the appointment type, and then enters an end time based on the preset appointment duration. This appointment will then be displayed in an individual schedule 43 of the type seen in FIG. 2, with the duration and the color for that type of appointment represented on the thermometer type bar graph 44.

Referring to FIG. 11, a "Find Appointment" command 133 is executed in the "Edit" menu 126 (FIG. 14) to execute another portion of program code to display a dialog box 101 for searching for appointments. This box includes an entry window 102 for entering a search string, a window 103 for entering a selected group, a window 104 for entering a selected resource, data boxes 105, 106 for entering a date range, data boxes 107, 108 for entering a time range, status boxes 109 for searching for all appointments 110 of a certain appointment status. The appointments 110 located in a search are displayed in a display area 111 at the bottom of the screen, and a pop-up menu 112 can be displayed with a right button mouse click on the appointment to be modified.

Referring to FIG. 12, under the "Reports" menu 128 (FIG. 14), a "Missed Appointments" command 135 can be selected and executed to display a dialog box 113 for selecting the group in window 114 and date range in data boxes 115, 116 for generating a list of all missed appointments within these parameters. The report is sent to a printer to be printed and saved in a report file with the "Run Report" command button 117.

Referring to FIG. 13, the schedules are refreshed on the screen from data that is input on the computer running the program or a computer connected by networking to the computer displaying the schedules. The refresh rate of the daily schedules can be controlled by executing the "Preferences" command 136 under the "File" menu 125 (FIG. 14) and displaying the dialog box 120 seen in FIG. 10 and then entering number for the refresh rate in hours (if that long), minutes and seconds in boxes 121, 122 and 123 and executing the "OK" button 124. The schedules can also be refreshed instantaneously by operating the F5 command key on the keyboard to execute the refresh command 137.

This has been a detailed description of various examples of how the invention can be carried out. Those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the various details may be modified in arriving at other detailed embodiments, in that these embodiments will come within the scope of the invention.

For example, while the invention has been described in relation to a veterinary practice, other embodiments include other types of medical practices, as well as other types of businesses, such as auto repair or beauty salons. In this respect, the term patient or client should be understood to be the equivalent of customer in these other businesses. Similarly, the term "health" as used encompasses conditions beyond medical health for these other types of businesses.

Keeping in mind these equivalents of the embodiments covered by the invention described in detail herein, the following claims are made.

We claim:

1. A method of operating a computer, wherein in response to a first user input, said method comprises displaying a screen display having i) a plurality of appointment schedules side-by-side for a corresponding group of persons or resources, each appointment schedule including separately from others of the plurality of appointment schedules a) a